

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

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The Author-Host A Great Visit to Sandisfield, but Something Was Missing

By Mary Richie

The Sandisfield Players, in their so individualistic presentation of "Under Milk Wood," connected us to the mind of the poet Dylan Thomas and to his if-need-be imagined Welsh village of Llareggub. But my mind was brought also to a long-ago weekend at Sage House in Sandisfield and an earlier encounter of a literary sort.

This was in 1977, before I had my own link to the Berkshires. A literary bachelor friend of mine rang me up from Sandisfield to say that his college friend was driving east from Ohio, would be stopping off in New York, and wouldn't I like to drive up with him to Sandisfield.

After a few hours' drive my amiable new acquaintance and I found ourselves on a dirt road which led to a very fine, very old house overlooking a meadow fringed by forest. Our host was welcoming in his own way – that is, we found

Cont'd on p.4

Many Visions for Our Town INITIAL DRAFT OF A LONG WISH LIST

By Bill Price

The informational meeting called by the Strategic Planning Committee on July 23 drew an overflow crowd of at least 50 residents to the Firehouse #2 meeting room. A few late-comers stood in the doorways next to the fire trucks to listen and take part.

The meeting was not interrupted even by a fierce thunderstorm that landed on Sandisfield about an hour into the meeting and continued until after the meeting concluded about 9 p.m. Residents drove home in pouring rain.

Along with assessing town buildings, the committee has been working toward creating a master plan for Sandisfield, which the town needs in order to apply for state grants with a reasonable expectation of success. This meeting was not to begin writing such a plan, but to invite residents to help create a vision of what they would like the town to look like in the future and to begin to lay a rough blueprint.

"People want to have a say in what Sandisfield will become, what should stay the same and what should change," said Kathy Jacobs, co-chair of the Strategic Planning Committee. "I was pleased with the turnout and the many ideas that people

were willing to discuss in front of their neighbors."

The committee has been meeting for nearly a year with only a few members. "We want people to join in and help," said co-chair Ralph Morrison. "You don't have to be a committee member to attend meetings, they're open to everyone. But if you'd like to join us officially write a short letter to the Select Board to that effect and give it to the Town Clerk, and you'll be appointed."

The committee hopes to have a draft master plan ready next year, a draft document that the Select Board can begin to discuss and advise. The plan is actually approved and implemented by the town's Planning Board, with guidance from Selectmen.

A town Master Plan is only a guide, not an unchangeable document. Committee member Nina Carr described a Master Plan as a "guiding plan, subject to periodic revision, ideas that the town checks in on now and then to see if we're getting to where we want to go." The committee will have planning sessions throughout the drafting process, which should, Kathy said, "avoid surprising anyone."

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Original Store/Gas Station Proposal Returns SELECT BOARD HEARING, AUGUST 11

By Bill Price

The proposal for a convenience store/gas station by Happy Banga of Lee is moving again through the town's approval processes.

A hearing to consider the proposal and take public comments will be held at the Select Board's regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, August 11, at 7 p.m. at the Town Hall Annex. The architectural plans are available for

viewing at Town Hall during business hours.

A similar hearing last Spring approved the country store/gas station proposed by local residents Kim and Chandru Paspuletti. That hearing drew a significant number of residents, and Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko anticipates a good-sized turnout for this hearing as well.

Cont'd on p.3

Out on a Limb articles are opinion/editorials written by and for town residents about subjects important to Sandisfield. They do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Times. Send proposed articles to PO Box 584, Sandisfield, 01255, or email editor@sandisfieldtimes.org.



Leadership Training, Anyone?

By Rita Kasky

I am one of a handful of residents of Sandisfield who fairly regularly attend Monday night Selectmen's meetings. However, after the meeting of June 23, I won't be attending any others unless, in my role as a member of the Finance Committee, I need to be there.

We vote for our Selectmen with the hopes that they will be the thoughtful, smart and forward-thinking people we expect to lead our town. Granted that

each of our Selectmen has a full-time job elsewhere so we recognize that the time they have to take care of town business is limited. However, we do pay them each \$5,500 per year, and I think it's reasonable to expect that they conduct their weekly meetings in a professional and courteous way. In my opinion, that does not happen.

The Chair of the Select Board does not control the agenda, although that is part of his role – he leaves it to the administrative assistant and from my perspective that is a mistake – not that she can't handle it but because there needs to be a beginning and an end to each agenda item and the Chair has to control that – and doesn't. I struggle at the meetings, trying to understand what the discussion is about, trying very hard (to the point of sheer frustration) to hear the conversation between the Selectmen and the others who sit at the front table and mumble to each other. I find it distracting when they engage in chit-chat. The meetings are lifeless, and the general routine seems to be to postpone decision-making for as long as possible.

This same scenario has played out far too often. Last June 23, after the meeting rambled during an hour of "discussion" on one or two agenda items that were sprinkled with conversations about their personal lives, I just couldn't wait any longer for the meeting to come to the agenda items I wanted to hear about. Frustrated and disgusted, I left without hearing about plans for the cemetery or the town administrator's contract (which would have been discussed after the Selectmen completed an Executive Session on the subject). In fact, I didn't learn much about what's happening in the town where I live, pay taxes, and try to be helpful.

I'm on the town Finance Committee, and we work hard to monitor the budgets each year and are constantly looking for ways to increase town revenue without increasing taxes. We often face push-back from the Selectmen who are ultimately responsible for the budget. In fact, as uncomfortable as I am with the way the Select Board meetings are handled, I had to return on June 30 to hear the responses to questions the Finance Committee had posed to the Select Board, in writing, at the end of April. It was not an easy meeting to sit through and when they responded to just half of the questions, I was so frustrated that I left, again.

So I'm writing this in the hope that more residents will come to the meetings and engage with the Selectmen in ways that give residents the opportunity to learn how our town is governed. Perhaps with greater participation from residents, the Select Board will be forced to learn how to lead. Then maybe someday I'll find my way back to Town Hall as a responsible citizen. 🍷

Rita Kasky has been a member of the Finance Committee for five years.

Post Office to Remain Open

WITH SHORTER HOURS

By Times Reporters

The post office will not close. As representatives of the USPS said at the July 2 meeting to determine our PO's future, "You people in small towns are the backbone of the postal service. You're the only ones still sending 1st-class mail."

About 25 residents turned out for the meeting, more, said the reps, than they see in most town meetings. With the USPS in deep financial trouble, the service will cut hours in many small towns, including Sandisfield, but is no longer interested in closing offices altogether.



New Postmaster Geoffrey Coelho joined the USPS only 4 months ago. He replaces Tina Levasseur. Geoffrey, who lives in Otis, is a local photographer whose work has been exhibited at galleries and local art shows throughout the Berkshires.

The service window will be open 6 hours, down from 7½. The new hours had not been announced as of press time. There should be no change in Saturday hours.

When the new hours are instituted, however, access to the PO boxes inside the lobby will be 24 hours a day, as the boxes in the entryway are now. The PO itself will be locked, but not the lobby door.

Revenue is important to ensure a viable post office, said the reps, so residents should buy stamps through the local office. And have as much mail as possible delivered to you here in town, which credits the local office. 🍷

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Town's Vision

Cont'd from p.1

The sometimes unwieldy meeting was designed to elicit ideas and wish lists from residents, and it succeeded in doing that. The committee presented a list of seven major topics. Kathy asked for "blue sky ideas," and she got some. A bit of fun was had with those assigned to maintain the lists when they stopped to discuss rather than simply make the list.

The following rough ideas should be considered "works in progress."

TOWN SERVICES

- Transportation
- Public to surrounding towns
- Vans, pools, ride shares
- Fire/police/ambulance
- New membership, volunteers needed

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

- Maintain roads, snow removal
- Maintain dirt roads
- Encourage regional support from other towns, and support them in return

MEDICAL

- Urgent care
- Wellness center
- Volunteer corps
- Individual needs for homebound residents

TECHNOLOGY AND WIFI SUPPORT

- Wifi and Internet
- Telephone and email directories

CEMETERY POLICIES

RECREATION

- State parks
- Maintain lakes and forests
- Department of Conservation Resources improvement of current sites
- Yanner Park
- For young people
- Recreation center, skate park
- Snowmobile trails

LAND USE

- Zoning issues
- Balance growth with preservation
- State-owned land
- Land with development issues
- Wetlands, ledge
- Community garden
- Agricultural and open space
- Natural resources
- Right to Farm bill
- Farmers' Market
- Solar farms
- Agritourism
- Become entry to the Berkshire Wine Trail

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Acknowledge the town is a gateway to the Berkshires; use zoning to avoid Rt. 8 becoming commercial strip
- Specialty events
- Information booth
- Solar farms
- 3-phase power
- Bed and breakfasts

HOUSING

- Affordable housing for seniors, young people
- Go beyond single family homes
- Veterans' housing, disabled, those on Social Security
- Second home ownership

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL

- Preserve/reinforce concept of historical villages
- Sandisfield Arts Center; broaden use throughout the community
- Annual town-wide celebrations
- Encourage tourism

Toward the end of the meeting, questions were asked with no answers. Everyone agreed the town would benefit from a central gathering place, but there was no agreement where that should be. And that thought was drawing the audience into a discussion of the committee's other charge, to assess whether the town should replace or repair its public buildings – a topic for another time.

Next steps for a master plan include documenting these ideas, data gathering and writing the more basic sections of the master plan that apply to the current state of the town.

The committee asks that residents call or write any of the committee members with ideas and suggestions. The committee co-chairs are Kathy Jacobs and Ralph Morrison; members: Anina Carr, David Hubbard, Jeff Gray, John Skrip, and Mary Turek.

John Skrip reminded residents that ideas can be placed online in the Town Suggestion Box on the town's website: www.sandisfield.info.

Additional town meetings will be held in the Fall and next Spring. Regular meetings of the Strategic Planning Committee are the third Wednesday of every month at 7 p.m. at Fire Station #2 on Rt. 57. All are welcome. 🍷

The Strategic Planning Committee expresses its appreciation to the Sandisfield Fire Department for the use of their building for the meeting and thanks very much to the Cultural Council for the donuts and coffee.

Store/Gas Station Proposal Returns

Cont'd from p.1

Mr. Banga, under the corporate identify of Akaal Properties, LLC, operates the Route 102 Package Store in Lee and the Sunoco station in Winsted on Rt. 8. He is asking approval for construction and operation of a fuel station and convenience store with a drive-through food service on the highway opposite MJ Tuckers. His representatives appeared before the Board of Health in July where their plans were approved, pending amplification regarding septic and other issues.

Mr. Banga has not returned calls requesting information about his plans.

Town residents have been discussing the competing plans since 2013 when the proposals were first raised following the destruction of the New Boston Store. Nearly every resident would welcome a store/gas station, but many would prefer that it not be the kind of a generic operation that can be found in any strip mall in the country. For a current op-ed opinion, see page 17 for the Out on a Limb column by Bogart Muller.

Not far away, at her Silverbrook Café & Country Store, owner/operator Connie D'Andrea has worked hard to build a clientele. Her store is currently open with regular hours. 🍷

SANDISFIELD VOLUNTEER FIREMEN STEAK ROAST

on Saturday, August 9, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Dancing from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. at Fire House #2 on Route 57. Tickets are available from any of the volunteers and are not available at the door. Call A & M Auto, 258-3381 for tickets. Buy ice cream bars afterwards to benefit the Sandisfield Scholarship Fund.

The Author-Host

Cont'd from p.1

beautifully composed notes left on the broad center table telling us where to find what, which bedrooms to choose from, what food and drink to take freely. Where to walk, where to go for our evening meal.

He was in the house somewhere, for whenever we came back from our explorations we found the notes updated. He so hoped we were enjoying our visit.

And, we were. Our host somehow made us feel his friendly presence hovering from wherever it was he was hiding himself. With a bottle?

Probably. How could we know? Why should we. My traveling companion was inventive of attitude, choosing to be amused. The situation was so odd, how could one be annoyed. Why not think of our host as our invisible benefactor. Plainly, he intended us to enjoy our stay.

And we did. We liked one another. Our walks were full of wonder – the great rocks, the subtle swamp plants. The magic emergence of the lake. The elusive universe of the birds. And the house. There was no one to tell me of its history, but it had to be at least 250 years old. The wide, worn floorboards that had endured so many generations of feet. The open fire place, commodious as a ship's hull. The buttermilk paints of the stenciled flowers long ago drunk by the plaster. Perhaps our host was distracted or even deluded by the spirits of the house (not only those of the bottle).

And then, on Sunday morning, came the telephone call. The phone rang and rang, it had to be answered. The call came from the essayist Elizabeth Hardwick. She had been long married to the poet Robert Lowell but a few years ago he had left her to marry a woman in England.

Now, he had decided to return to Elizabeth. He had taken the plane from London, and the taxi from the airport, and in the taxi, virtually on her doorstep, he had died.

It was Elizabeth on the phone, needing to speak to our host, needing him to come to her side.

It was he, the invisible he, to whom she turned.

So, we had to make our host visible. My companion went upstairs to the part of the house where he must be. Roused him, washed him, dressed him, packed his case. I made some food. We ordered a car.

Finally, there he was.

I did get to see him.

Now, these years later, my host is no more. Nor is Sage House – it was burned to the ground by an arsonist, about fifteen years ago.

But Sandisfield is here. And poetry.

And they have been joined. 🍷

Mary Richie is novelist and short story writer and woodblock artist. She visited Sandisfield many years ago, and now lives in Mill River.



Last Call for Wild & Woolly Animal Tales!

Every Sandisfield resident has a great animal story. Come tell yours! Sandisfield Arts Center, September 6, Saturday morning, 10 a.m.

In this Wild & Woolly event, we'll gather around our (virtual) potbelly stove and travel through time with old and new animal tales – funny or scary, touching or hairy.

If you have a story to share, please contact Barbara Penn at sarcanimals@gmail.com or Box 117, Sandisfield 01255. Include a few words about your

story and your contact info (phone or email). For those shy about speaking, tell or write your story in advance and we'll have someone read it. Or just drop in and join the story-telling circle! Admission is free.

“Wild & Woolly: Animal Stories that Make Sandisfield Sandisfield” is part of the September Month of Celebrating Animals at the Sandisfield Arts Center – art, poetry, music, stories, animals on parade and in our lives! Find details on all events at www.sandisfieldartscenter.org.



Laura Danehower Whyte

THE MILK WOOD SONNET

The foolishness apart, I found
At marrow-deep the love
Of language glimmering above
A tiny village with a sovereign sound.

How could he have made these words,
And leave so soon and leave behind
A puzzle that we must now unwind,
Made from the bonny and absurd.

You see, in Llareggub the poems are quick
And salty, born in brine.

So we must learn to turn the trick
And figure out his grand design.

But God save alcohol, it makes a solemn promise
To decipher all the poems of our gentle Dylan Thomas.

Val Coleman
Town Hill Road



Patricia Hubbard and Evers Whyte
Photos: Bill Price

Eccentric, Quirky, but Perfect

SANDISFIELD PLAYERS
PRESENT A SUPERB
“UNDER MILK WOOD”

By Barbara Muso Penn

*“To begin at the beginning: It is spring, moonless
night in the small town, starless and bible-black,
the cobble streets silent...”*

So opens “Under Milk Wood,” Dylan Thomas’ last work, finished four days before his death in 1953 at age 39.

Thomas worked on this play for 20 years, beginning it as a teenager. While it is a “prose” work, the lines are sheer poetry: as Thomas and Ben Luxon (this production’s director) both note, it is a “play for voices.” “Under Milk Wood” takes place in one day and a night in a mythical, small seaside Welsh village, “LLareggub” (spelled backwards: “Bugger all”).

The characters are eccentric. Even their names are quirky, some names suggesting their occupation or preoccupation: “Dai Bread” (baker), “Morgan Organ (organist),” “Evans the Death” (undertaker), but mostly the characters are the people of “every town” – old, young, shopkeeper, school teacher, funeral director, rector, musician, poet, farmer, butcher, postman. Reportedly Thomas was trying to recreate the innocence and wonder of his childhood in contrast to the realities of World War II. Whatever the author’s intent, this play is filled with all of what being human is about – dreams, hopes, desires, disappointments, fear, illusions, and most of all, humor and life’s overwhelming joy and love.

Under the direction of Benjamin Luxon, this production was magnificent. I can’t imagine one better!

This was especially remarkable because most of the actors in the cast have been on the stage only once or twice – an amateur, non-professional community group. Here they were performing a play that is carried not by action or movement but by the voice. Adding to the wonder was the fact that Thomas’ language, with its rich metaphors and rhythms and poetry, would be



From the Director . . .

This is only our third production and for me as company director it is so rewarding to see the players growing in confidence and ability. So many people in our audiences remarked on the “professionalism” of the performances and production. Also, how rewarding to have nearly two capacity audiences for a play that is not often performed in this country. This little company is growing into something that can be a source of pride for the town of Sandisfield.

– Ben Luxon

difficult for even experienced actors to speak believably and to perform successfully. But this cast did just that.

All of the performances were memorable and uniformly top-rate.

Ben Luxon managed to pull from the actors their very best; to finely tune these human instruments essentially to the level of a symphony where each part was harmoniously integrated into the voice/song of the play.

Shout-outs to the wonderful performances of Val Coleman, Susie Crofut, Roberta Myers, Simon Winchester in a cameo, Aaron Bartow, Ron Bernard, Alice Boyd, Patricia Hubbard, Paul Van Sickle, Sandy Parisky, John Funchion, Michael Sinclair, and Lauren Paul, almost all performing multiple roles.

Particularly memorable, though, were the performances of Tina Sotis and Jean Atwater-Williams, especially their two-person dyad as the two wives of Dai Bread. Sotis, the sultry, mysterious “gypsy,” and Atwater-Williams, the down to earth, ordinary wife, were simply superb.

Evers Whyte, Mary Anne Grammer, Laura Danehower Whyte (who not only acted but did a great job singing *a capella*), and Reid Sinclair give exceptionally powerful performances.

Commanding the stage was Ben Luxon with his deep baritone voice, serving as both narrator

and Rev. Eli Jenkins, the poet. He effortlessly delivered Thomas’ rich poetry as if he had written it (perhaps the alter ego of Thomas?). Charles Fidler, as Voice 2, had the daunting task of matching Luxon in delivery, and he did it brilliantly.

But this production belonged to Ben Luxon: he was its heart. He sat off to the left on the stage when the actors were delivering their lines, silently mouthing each and every line, his face mirroring their emotion, completely absorbed in the progress of the play. For nearly two hours (with a 10-minute break), the audience was similarly absorbed, held in Ben Luxon’s and Dylan Thomas’ wonderful grasp.

Set, lighting and costumes were minimal and simple and did not intrude or detract from “the voices.” The stage painting of LLareggub by Susie Crofut was magical; the backdrop for the painting by Jane Hason fit wonderfully.

Added by Luxon to end the play and not found in the original production was a famous 17th-century Welsh tune-hymn, “Aberystwyth,” by Joseph Parry. As the lights dimmed to black, the cast in darkness sang the hymn, a line of which states “Safe into thy (God’s) haven guide.” Perhaps Ben Luxon’s wish for Dylan Thomas.

“LLengyfarceguadav” to all – Welsh for CONGRATULATIONS! 🍷

An Evening of Grand Opera

By Charlene Peet

The “Evening of Grand Opera” will not be readily forgotten by anyone who attended the performances at the Arts Center in July.

The magic began as the audience ascended the stairs to the auditorium to find the space transformed into a Grand Cafe, tables carefully “dressed” and arranged with a clear sight-line to the stage; red wine in place on each table.

When the house lights went down the stage became an elegant drawing room with an Oriental rug on the floor, easy chairs, an antique carved straight-backed chair, end tables, and a floral arrangement, all grouped near the grand piano. This staging, designed by Susie Crofut, was centered against a black back-drop relieved by a printed fabric drape suggesting a valance above a wide, dome-shaped window.

Before the audience caught its breath, a lady in a dazzling purple gown and four men in tuxedos filed onto the stage: Patricia Vital, soprano, Benjamin Sloman, tenor, Charles Coleman, baritone, with Lloyd Arriola, pianist, followed by Ben Luxon, master of ceremonies. Drawing from his own vast experience in the operatic world, Ben introduced each aria, duo, or trio in turn, providing brief verbal contexts as the program progressed.



Charles Coleman, the composer-vocalist who helped organize the performances for the evening, is the son of Sandisfield's Val Coleman.



Opera and Supper in Sandisfield

Photo: Susie Crofut

The first piece was Valentin's Aria from "Faust" by Charles Gounod. The sturdy, sonorous baritone voice of Charles Coleman (who was instrumental in bringing these musicians to Sandisfield) set the tone for this enchanting evening of widely known and loved operatic favorites.

Next, Patricia Vital sang the aria "Quel guardo, il cavaliere" from "Don Parquale" by Gaetano Donizetti. The soprano's stage presence and coloratura voice delighted the audience.

The third aria was "Recontita Armonia" from "Tosca" by Giacomo Puccini sung by Benjamin Sloman, an Australian tenor and rapidly rising young star. He sang poetically, powerfully, and magically as only a fine tenor can.

All three singers demonstrated complete command of the music and their various roles, using gestures and body language that made for direct personal communication with every member of the audience. And as Ms. Vital commented afterward, the audience was so warmly receptive that the artists were inspired to go a little beyond their best.

The pianist, Lloyd Arriola was heroic. Having performed as a solo piano recitalist and a soloist with orchestras and collaborating with many of today's great artists, he has also conducted over 100 operas and musicals. At his command the grand piano both thundered and roared with passion or became a gentle whisper. Mr. Arriola knew what the singers needed, perhaps even before they knew themselves. And he never once let them down.

During intermission a light supper was served, consisting of a tempting salad plate with corn bread and a desert of strawberry shortcake, all prepared by gourmet chef Adam Manacher and served by a very efficient crew.

In addition to the composers already mentioned, works by Mozart, Verdi, Wagner, Bizet, Tchaikowsky, Strauss, and Korngold, were sung; mostly in the traditional vein. There was one notable exception: "Jai Perdu ta photo" from "Silent Night" by Kevin Puts which employed a very modern tonality, with a setting of the western front during WWI on Christmas Eve, 1914, when a spontaneous truce was declared: a one night respite from war. The aria was masterfully performed by Charles Coleman, himself a noted composer in the modern vein.

The final trio, "Libiamo" from "La Traviata" by Giuseppe Verdi, brought the program to a magnificent conclusion, but not before the audience joined in with rhythmic clapping and finally in singing the last chorus.

Thunderous applause and foot stomping by the full-house audience was so vigorous sawdust drifted down on board members listening from the lower level, causing some concern about the safety of the floor.

Thanks to many people, both named and unnamed, the evening was an incredible artistic, gastronomic, and economic success. 🍷





Moreover...

By Simon Winchester

All Aboard the Berkshire Express!

I am going to make this easy. I want each one of you to write a letter – an email, of course – to a very nice man, Richard Davey. His address is richard.davey@state.ma.us.

I'll make it even easier: if you look at this link – <http://berkshireraincampaign.org/index.php/category/news/> – you can see letters that others have written to Rich, me included. Copy and paste them, we don't mind at all. Just write to Rich. Today, if possible.

By doing so, you could change this part of the world, big-time.

Richard Davey is our state Secretary of Transportation. He is a key figure who can help achieve something that I think almost every one of us wants. He can help bring the trains back to Berkshire County.

Think what that would mean for us. There would be working railroad stations again in Lee, in Great Barrington, in Housatonic, in Sheffield. Your kids slaving in Brooklyn could be up here to see you in three hours – a subway to Grand Central, a train at ten, then step down at Lee in time for lunch!

To go down for a day's visiting or shopping in Manhattan would be suddenly so easy. It would no longer require a slog of a drive over to Wassaic

and then two hours and a train-change at SouthEast. Or down to Waterbury with a train-change at Bridgeport. You could park at the new station north of Barrington at seven, climb on board, read the paper, have a coffee and a muffin, and be on 42nd Street by ten in the morning.

Commute if you like. Have your chums come up for a day's cycling, or you go down for a theatre and come home on the last train of the night. By the same token: you have friends in Kent or Norwalk, Canaan or New Milford, or even Pittsfield – if the fare is right and the schedules work – then you won't have to drive the car up or down there. You can sit back and let the engineer do the rest.

I'm not dreaming. There is a growing belief, backed up by studies performed by a boffin at Williams College, that bringing train service back to the Berkshires would bring jobs here and make environmental good sense. A million people a year would ride, says nice Rich Davey. It would all be so convenient and, dare I say it to those who love trains, great fun.

I collect timetables. The 1957 Official Guide shows the named trains leaving Grand Central for Pittsfield: The Mahaiwe at 8 each weekday morning, The Mahkeenac at the same time on Sunday. The Umpachenee at 4 in the afternoon, The Litchfield at 7. And in between, the flagship, The Berkshire Express – 5:27 out of Grand Central, with Parlor Car and Café Coach, to arrive Pittsfield at 10.03.

That was the New York, New Haven and Hartford. Today it is the Housatonic Railroad Company. The state has just bought the line's right-of-way, to help matters along. They want to do it. They want to bring back the names.

We just need them to bring back the trains. So write a letter. Please. Wouldn't you just relish catching The Umpachenee again, after all these years? 🚂

music and more **14**
Saturdays at 4:30 pm
August-September
 At the Meeting House, Rt. 57
 New Marlborough, MA

- Aug 9 Tatiana Dimitriadis, violin; Jonathan Bass, piano
Prokofiev, Schumann, Beethoven
- Aug 23 From Satie to Gershwin: Music, Dance, and the Spoken Word
Dancers from Berkshire Pulse; Pianist Doris Stevenson; Narration by actor Nancy Morrison
- Aug 30 Baroque Gems with musicians from Aston Magna • Free Pre-Concert Talk at 3:30pm
Music from Monteverdi through Bach
- Sept 6 Carol Wincenc, Flute; Escher String Quartet
Mozart, Haydn, Debussy, Yuko Uebayashi
- Sept 13 Time Flies! Karen Akers / American Songbook *Don Rebic, piano*
One of America's premiere concert and cabaret stars. **Post-concert gala wine tasting hosted by Domaney's of Great Barrington**
- Sept 20 Lydian String Quartet
Free Pre-Concert Talk at 3:30pm
Schubert, Ravel, Shostakovich
- Sept 27 Award-Winning Authors
Roy Blount Jr., Paul Auster, Siri Hustvedt, and Filmmaker Ellen Weissbrod.

Receptions with the artists after the performances

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“Sistering” May Solve Mystery about Town’s Naming

A VISIT TO THE MOTHER COUNTRY

By Ron Bernard

July 24. Ombersley, Worcestershire, England. It has taken a while but we may, finally, learn the circumstances of the Town’s naming in 1762.

Until now all we know is that Sandisfield was somehow named in honor of Lord Samuel Sandys (pronounced as sands) who was the British official in charge of “trade and the plantations” at the time of Sandisfield’s incorporation as a town 252 years ago. For decades the assumption has been that town founder Daniel Brown and the others made a politically astute gesture to gain favor from the colonial administration. Historians, including this writer, find the theory both unsatisfying and improbable.

Increased interest about Sandisfield’s history, mainly a result of our 250th anniversary celebrations, revived this long-dormant question. Local and state records shed no light. Perhaps the answer could be found in England, specifically in the town of Ombersley, ancestral home since 1612 of the Sandys family.

Last year the Sandisfield Historical Commission approached the Ombersley Parish Council about the idea of forming a friendship association. This practice, called “sister cities” or “twinning,” is very common. Towns in western Massachusetts, including Pittsfield and North Adams, for example, have such arrangements that promote cultural, educational, and even economic cooperation. Sandisfield and Ombersley have comparable demographics, such as relatively small, stable populations as well as traditions, e.g., agricultural – similarities considered important for successful relationships. But we are specifically linked in history through the Sandys family.

The response from Ombersley was immediate and enthusiastic. A visit by a Sandisfield delegation was arranged and took place in July. Ben Luxon (native son of Cornwall, England), his wife, Susie Crofut, and Jean Atwater-Williams and I stopped in Ombersley for several days to become acquainted with the people, their way of life, and their institutions. We were welcomed with marvelous hospitality and much interest about Sandisfield’s history and life today.



The Sandisfield delegation with members of Ombersley Parish Town Council.

On behalf of our town we presented our hosts with a copy of our newly published history by Elizur Smith. In turn, they handed us a copy of their own history, written in 1999, covering their town’s 1,000 years.

In addition to the historical fact of the naming, at least one new connection between the two towns was discovered (to be reported in a future issue of the Times).



Ombersley Court, home of the Sandys family, dates to 1732.

The highlight of our short visit was a tour of the grounds of Ombersley Court (1732) by permission of the current Lady Sandys. Such access is very rarely granted. It was a privilege for us as well as our English hosts, some of whom had never before been invited to the Court. Lady Sandys later expressed how pleased she was that the visit might lead to a lasting association.

A reciprocal visit by a small delegation from Ombersley to Sandisfield was proposed for late next summer or early fall. The visit could seal a formal friendship pact with a Proclamation. Meanwhile, the Sandisfield Historical Commission will work with its counterparts in England to explore potential projects of mutual interest and community benefit. Ombersley historians have also taken the challenge to research their ancient archives in the hopes of discovering exactly how and why our town was named Sandisfield. ♡



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Letter to the Editor in Response to "What Should We Show Our English Guests?"

I am Joseph Clark III, the third oldest native in next door Tolland. I wrote several books on the town and our ancestral farm and I know Ron Bernard, to drop a name.

Even though Tolland is not Sandisfield, we live only a mile away through the woods. I read with interest about your potential visitors from the UK next year and would like to throw our hat into the ring for an afternoon of croquet and strawberries and cream here on our dedicated lawns. Foreign guests are nothing new here, and I am a pioneer in croquet, having run tournaments all over New England and New York.

We entertain frequently and over the years many folks, both players and non-players, have enjoyed croquet weekends on our lawns. This past winter was tough on my father's 1935 creation as it was everywhere, but we hope to have repairs for at least one social afternoon "running the wickets" in late August this year, to which I would be happy to send you an invitation.

Meanwhile, someday, if it works for you, "what



*Informal croquet on the Clark's field,
Smithsonian Magazine, 1992*

could be more English than Sunday afternoon croquet, amongst the dashing bunnies and the rude catbirds, the white-clad gentlemen and ladies moving sloth-like between the wickets . . . their properly modulated tones hovering over the 1920s music emanating faintly from the Mallet House . . ."

We enjoy your paper very much.

With deepest regards,

Joe Clark
Tolland

Gallery Sundays Increase Artist Exposure

Five working committee members from the Sandisfield Arts Center have drawn a corp of volunteers together to launch Gallery Sundays. The Gallery volunteers open the Arts Center and provide staff on Sunday afternoons from 1 to 4 p.m.

The Sunday openings have been well received by artists who thus have more opportunities to show their work and for new visitors who stop by. Coordinator Jane Hason said, "Four people from Pittsfield stopped by one Sunday in July and said they were amazed that a small town like Sandisfield could have created such a beautiful performance space and gallery."

Six additional volunteers are needed to continue the program through the second week of October. Anyone who would like to lend a hand or for more information contact: flora@floraparisisky.com.



*Jane Hason and Flora Parisky display
one of the new banners for Gallery Sundays
at the Arts Center, open 1-4 p.m.*

SANDISFIELD ARTS CENTER

5 HAMMERTOWN RD SANDISFIELD, MA
413-258-4100

INFO & TO BUY TICKETS ONLINE
SANDISFIELDARTSCENTER.ORG

august

2ND 10:30 AM
stuck down here
the fix of american poverty
a talk by **val coleman**

9TH 10:30 AM
**through the
looking glass**

norman rockwell's america
as imagined community
a talk by **bill cohn**

16TH 10:00 AM
**courtney maum &
miriam karmel**

two sandisfield debut
novelists talk about their
books

30TH 5 PM
jazz on the terrace
**fundraiser for the
arts center**

at the beautiful home of
 david and patricia hubbard.
soak in the view from quill
hill while enjoying wine, hors
d'oeuvres and the music of
zack cross



Funded in part by the Massachusetts Cultural
Council and Local Cultural Councils

A Fresh Look at Local Farm Stands, Grocery Stores, & More

By Sandy Parisky

Although you may be among those who can rely on homegrown vegetables as your source, others look around town wondering: where can you find fresh veggies, a loaf of bread or something else you need regularly or spur of the moment? There's something simple and satisfying about stopping by a farm stand, farmer's market, or local business. And don't overlook the value that comes with picking up a few items closer to home so you hold onto the verdant forest and country atmosphere that living in Sandisfield affords and that driving into Great Barrington, Lee, or Winsted interrupts.

After calling on the Town Clerk for Sandisfield's List of Licenses issued in 2014 and friends living in the Otis and Colebrook ends of town, I revised the article and map that the Times ran a year ago. Depending where you live in town, many of these are just a 10- to 15-minute drive, saving you time and gas.

Radiating from a central point on the map where New Hartford Road meets Route 57/ Sandisfield Road is a 5-mile circle. At this locus sits a contemporary granite monument honoring Sandisfield's 250th and an historical plaque marking the place where Sandisfield's 18th & 19th century Town Center once stood.

The accompanying list and map indicate vender categories that include country stores (such as Silverbrook Café & Country Store and Katie's Country Store); Farm Stands (such as When Pigs Fly Farm and Otis Farmers Market); Poultry

Products (one sells fresh breads and others take only phone orders); Farms; and Orchards. The name, location, and phone are numbered under each vendor category and keyed to a graphic symbol on the map. We regret errors or omissions and would welcome additions or corrections from readers about where they shop locally. ♥

VENDORS BY CATEGORY

(Numbers keyed by graphic symbols on map)

COUNTRY STORES

1. **Silverbrook Café & Country Store.** 57 Sandisfield Rd., Rt. 57, Sandisfield, 413-258-4597
2. **Otis Poultry Farm.** Main St., Rt. 8, Otis, 413-269-4321
3. **Mill River Country Store.** 448 Main Street, Mill River, New Marlborough, 413-229-2663
4. **The Monterey General Store.** Main Rd. Monterey, 413-528-5900
5. **Other Brother Darryl's, Seafood & Specialty Grocery Items.** 276 N. Main Rd., Rt. 8, Otis, 413-269-4235
6. **Katie's Country Store.** 1922 E. Otis Rd. Rt. 23, East Otis, 413-269-7782
7. **Papa's Healthy Food & Fuel.** 2000 E. Otis Rd. Rt. 23, E. Otis, 413-269-7779

FARM STANDS

1. **When Pigs Fly Farm.** 222 Sandisfield Rd. Rt. 57, Sandisfield, 413-258-3397
2. **TerMar Triangle Farm.** 106 Sandy Brook Turnpike, Rt. 183, Sandisfield, 413-258-2898
3. **Tara Beardsley Farm.** 90 Sandisfield Rd., Rt. 57, Sandisfield, 413-258-4958
4. **Francis Deming Farm Stand.** Opposite Katie's Country Store, Rt. 23, E. Otis (Fri., Sat. & Sun.) 413-258-4717
5. **Otis Farmer's Market.** Next to Papa's Healthy Food & Fuel, 2000 E. Otis Rd., Rt. 23 (Sat. only 9-1 from Mother's Day to Columbus Day)
6. **Gould Farm Stand.** Rt. 23 at Gould Rd. Monterey 413-528-1804
7. **Francis Deming Farm Stand.** Next to Farmington River Cafe & Deli, Rt. 8, Otis (Fri., Sat. & Sun) 413-258-4717

8. **Fern Hill Farm.** 143 Smith Hill Rd., Winsted, CT, 860-833-6963
9. **Norfolk Farmers Market.** 19 Maple Ave. Norfolk, CT (1 block north of Rt. 44)
10. **Beulahland Organic Farm Stand.** 519 Main Road, Monterey, no phone
11. **Bracken Brae Farm Stand.** 495 Main Road, Monterey, 413-528-9335

POULTRY PRODUCTS

1. **Long Acre Farm.** 29 Hammertown Rd., Sandisfield, 413-258-4535
2. **Snow Farm.** 16 Beech Plain Rd., Sandisfield, 413-258-4929
3. **Planted Feather Farm & Bakery.** 368 Colebrook River Rd. Rt. 8, Colebrook, Thurs.-Sun. 9-5, 860-379-8664
4. **When Pigs Fly Farm.** 222 Sandisfield Rd. Route 57, Sandisfield, 413-258-3397

FARMS

1. **Fox Hill Farm.** 28 Silverbrook Rd., Sandisfield, 413-258-4609
2. **Planted Feather Farm & Bakery.** 368 Colebrook River Rd. Rt. 8, Colebrook, Thurs.-Sun. 9-5, 860-379-8664
3. **Joshua's Farm.** 45 Dodd Rd, Sandisfield, 860-671-0327

ORCHARDS

1. **Riiska Brook Orchard.** 101 New Hartford Rd, Sandisfield, 413-258-4761



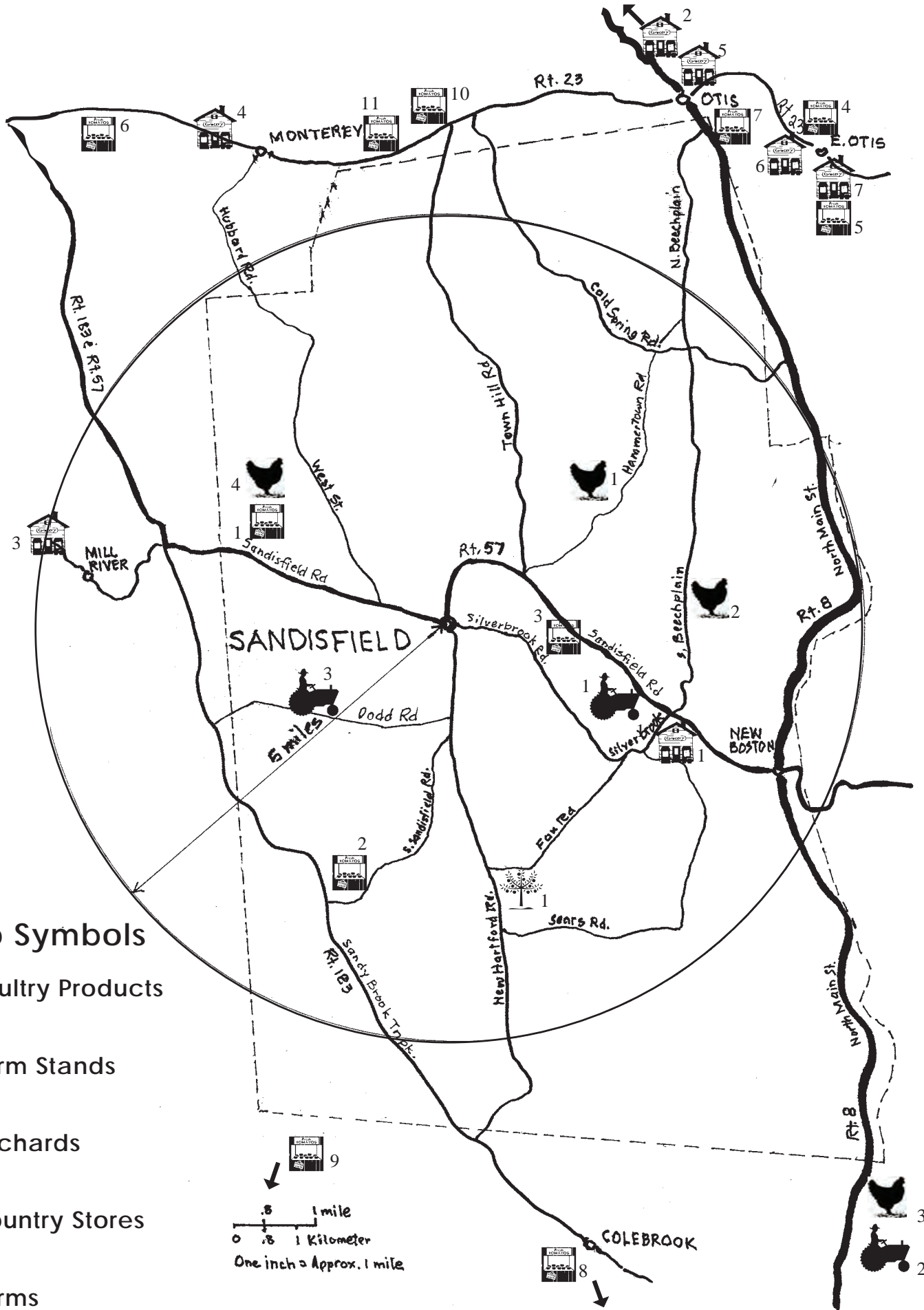
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Key to Symbols

-  Poultry Products
-  Farm Stands
-  Orchards
-  Country Stores
-  Farms

A Visit to the Sandisfield Historical Society

... WHERE MY DAD TOLD STORIES

By Lois Platt



Willard is middle in the back row. His mother to his right. Kneeling far left, his sister Ann. Far right, his cousin Pat. His grandmother is second from right, front row.

On Saturday, June 21, I made my first trip ever to the Sandisfield Historical Society. My father, Willard Platt, was giving a talk about growing up in Sandisfield.

I was a little embarrassed to have to call and ask a "new" person in town, John Kuzmech, for directions. After all I grew up in Sandisfield. Yes, I moved to the Great Barrington area 30 years ago, but that's no excuse. I should have known where it is.

At the event, my father told stories of his adventures as a boy. He talked about his teacher, Emily Clark, or Emily Vogalus, as I knew her. He shared stories of the boys in class being pretty tough on her. One boy bit her on the leg after being told to sit under her desk for another crime he committed. That boy was sent to the woodshed and locked in. Earlier the boys had created a secret hiding place in the woodpile and the boy hid in the secret place. When Emily came to get the boy he seemed to have vanished. He showed up in school the next day, but Emily never did find out where he had gone.

My father spoke of growing up with Francis Deming and Tuffy Campetti. One story was about the boys at the age of 10 or 12 racing the Greyhound buses that came up Rt. 8. They were in an old model T with a box attached to the frame for the boys to ride in. My father was amazed they lived.

He told a story about coming home from school and taking a short-cut across the pond by the old Red Barn. Well, Angelo Campetti had been cutting ice and of course my father fell in. It was about 14 degrees. He explained how he had to

sneak past his grandmother and mother to get to his third floor bedroom.

He told a story about the old shop that was on Rt. 8, right at the end of Clark Road, and how he was afraid to walk by because of the scary old man that seemed to appear in every window. It was reflection from the old warped window glass, but they didn't know that then. He had many funny stories, a lot that I had never heard.

Our Neighbor Willard Platt

A Selectman in the 1990s, Willard is currently a member of the Planning Board and the Sandisfield Historical Society. Before he retired, he maintained a herd of cows and calves in Connecticut and worked for 35 years in Bristol, commuting some 90 miles a day.

Born in 1930 in New York, Willard moved to Sandisfield when he was 10 to a house on the west side of the Farmington River on Clark Road. He has lived in the same house ever since. Built in 1830, the house has always been reached by a bridge across the Farmington.

As part of the Historical Society's oral history project, Willard recently recalled the time the bridge was lost.

"My mother was working in Dolly's nursing home up on Rt 8, 3 to 11. When she came home one night in August 1955 she woke me up and said a lot of water was running down Clark Road so she'd left the car on the bridge. If someone says there's really high water and I parked the car on the bridge, you're awake instantly. We had company then and I got all the cars on our side. Half an hour later I go down to look at the bridge and it's gone, just totally gone. We had to haul the cars out through the fields on the west side of the river with Al Riiska's tractor that was set up for logging with a boom on top and a winch. After the flood we had a rowboat on a line across the river. By pulling another line you could pull the boat sideways across the river. It would take about 5 minutes to pull it across, but it worked very well. The bridge was out for about a year."

The most intriguing part of my trip to the Society was what I felt and thought while I was there.

A friend of mine from NYC and Monterey came with me to support the Historical Society. We read the plaque in front of the building, a short history listing names of townspeople. Some names I only knew because there are roads named after them.

The sign mentioned the Riiskas. Oh, how I knew that name. My friend said these towns have long-time residents and I remembered the Tryons in Monterey, the Riiskas in Sandisfield, and many others.

When I went inside, I saw a bunch of historical stuff stored away. I wondered why it was not displayed someplace, like the town hall where the townspeople could see it.

I saw people I have not seen in a long time – Cora Roraback, Norton Fletcher, and about 15 other people. I wished there were more.

When I went inside, I looked at a large photo of the Class of 1930. Behind me, I heard talk of the Knox Trail, the Civil War, etc. While that talk was going on, I was looking into the eyes of the kids in that photo.

Gramma Fanny Hamilton/Spring. No she was not my grandmother but we called her that anyway. Just like Betty Wilbur was not my aunt and yet all the New Boston kids called her Aunt Betty. Cora Spring was in the photo as were the

Cont'd on p.13



With the bridge down in 1955, Willard towed the boat across the still swollen Farmington.



Willard Platt, late 1950s.

A Visit to the Sandisfield Historical Society

Cont'd from p.12

Campetti boys, the Linkovichs, Hyrcovichs, and O'Briens. All "Sandisfield names." No roads named after them.

I thought about Emily Clark teaching my father as a boy, then mentoring his daughters about horses. There is Steve Campetti as a boy looking at me from the photo. He would grow up to sell me penny candy in his store.

I thought this is my historical Sandisfield. These are the names of Sandisfield 1930 and on. This is my history. Not the Knox Trail or the Civil War, although they were important events.

As I left the meeting, I wondered: When I am 85, will anyone care about my childhood stories growing up in Sandisfield? I thought about the book *Sandisfield Then and Now: 1762-2012* with the photos of people standing in front of their houses. I wonder what photos a book titled *Sandisfield: 2014-2114* would have in it.


I thought about how lucky I was to grow up playing on the same beaver pond as my father

did as a kid. Or to have the same third floor bedroom as he did. And that old man in the shop? He was still there, or his reflection was, 40 years later, scaring all the neighborhood kids.

My Sandisfield generation all grew up playing in the same places their parents had played. We were very lucky kids.

Will our history be remembered? It left me pondering the meaning of history. Will the "new" peoples' history be remembered? How long do you have to live in town before your memories count?

It left me thinking. Why aren't we documenting our own history now? Let's all, on the same day, stand in front of our houses and take that picture that will be in the book: *Sandisfield: 2014- 2114*.

Let's document *us*. We/you are the past and the now. Pretty soon all of us will be just the past. 



The Bridge to Willard's House

The replacement of the one-lane bridge across the Farmington at the intersection of Clark and Roosterville Roads began this Spring. A temporary footbridge has been installed so resident Willard Platt can get to and from his house. Willard, 84, lives alone on the far side of the river. The bridge being replaced was installed after an earlier bridge was destroyed during the 1955 flood. Its replacement is scheduled to be finished in Spring 2015.



Willard crossing his new footbridge on his riding mower.

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Selectman's Letter

By Patrick Barrett

Our thanks to Phil Granin of Tolland for volunteering to write a Small Town Road Assistance Program Grant for repairing the Sandisfield portion of Rt. 57 that goes up the hill toward Tolland. Mr. Granin has secured numerous grants for Tolland, most recently a \$990,000 STRAP Grant for fixing their portion of Rt. 57. He has worked closely with Highway Superintendent Steve Harasyko and other town officials in putting together this grant proposal.

The New Hartford Road project should be finished this fall. Steve has been finalizing the bid packets for finishing the project with Berkshire Regional Planning Commission's Senior Transportation Planner Doug Plachcinski. Over the winter, plans will be put in place to address other deteriorating paved roads such as Town Hill Road, Hubbard Road, and the upper section of Rt. 183.

Last month our roads were seriously tested by the massive amounts of rain, but roads that used to wash away after every major storm have held up remarkably well. This is a testament to the planning and work put by the Sandisfield Highway Department and by the Tryon Construction Company. Getting these roads fixed properly has saved taxpayer money and allowed us to fix different roads each year as opposed to working on the same problem roads year after year.

Gary Bottoms has resigned his position as a member of the Farmington River School Committee. We thank Gary for his service and appreciate the work he puts in on the Sandisfield Planning Board. We would like to thank Sandra Snyder for stepping forward to serve on the Farmington River School Committee. As a member of the Sandisfield Fire Department and an EMT, she already does a lot for our community and we look forward to her advocating on behalf of the students from Sandisfield. We would like to thank Barbara Cormier, Linda Riiska, and Shirley Spring for being re-appointed as leaders in the Council on Aging. This group does a lot for our seniors, and we are lucky to have this dedicated group of women leading this organization. Nina Carr has been appointed to the Strategic Planning Committee. This group has been working on major initiatives for the town and we thank Ms. Carr for her willingness to help out. Kathie Burrows has been appointed to the Sandisfield Historical Commission. This group has worked diligently the last couple of years to acknowledge Sandisfield's rich history of

the town with the wonderful historical markers in our former towns. With her sincere interest in local history coupled with a deep concern over our cemeteries, Kathie will be a welcome asset to this group. We would also like to recognize Gene English for his dedicated service to the Sandisfield Library. Over the years Gene was a constant advocate for our Library and we thank him for a job well done.

I was saddened by the passing of Robert Ratigan, another distinguished resident raised in town who answered the call of duty for his country during World War II. Bob returned to serve his community for twenty-seven years as Superintendent of the Sandisfield Highway Department.

Our neighboring Monterey Highway Superintendent Maynard Forbes recently retired. Maynard set the bar extremely high for how a small-town highway department should run. Over the years Maynard was always generous with his time in providing suggestions and advice when called upon by Sandisfield officials. Every time I sought his assistance, he impressed me with his knowledge and willingness to be helpful to neighboring towns. Maynard will be missed, and we send congratulations and wish him a healthy, happy retirement. 🍷

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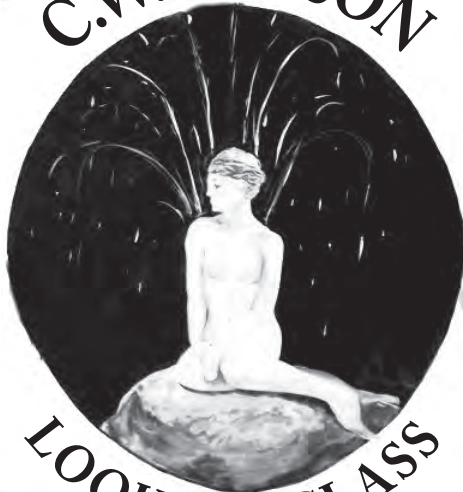
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OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

The Colebrook Store on Rt. 183 has closed again. We celebrated its reopening in the Times only last August. When the store first closed in 2007, it was the oldest continuously operated general store in Connecticut, some 195 years. For whatever reason the rebirth didn't work, we regret seeing the place empty again.



In our obituary of Bob Ratigan last month, we inadvertently wrote that his friend **Norton Fletcher** was inducted into the US Army at the end of World War II. Instead, Norton was a proud member of the US Navy.

Church Fundraiser Successful

At its annual summer dinner, the New Boston Congregational Church raised over \$1,000. More than 100 ham-and-scalloped-potato dinners were served, and diners lined up for seconds.

The church will hold its annual Harvest Dinner toward the end of October.

Services are held at the New Boston Church on Sandisfield Road, Rt. 57, on the second Sunday of each month at 10 a.m. Ministering is Toby Quirk of Northhampton, Massachusetts.

A professional life and leadership coach, Toby is an ordained minister in the Assemblies of God with 18 years of pastoral experience. A retired U.S. Army infantry officer, he is a graduate of West Point and received an M.A. in Human Resources Development from Webster University in St. Louis. He founded the Southwick Assembly of God and was pastor of Pioneer Valley Assembly of God in Huntington. He is certified with AG Coaching and the International Coaching Federation.



Sandisfield Historical Society



A Report in Poetry

By Acting President John Kuzmech


We heard Norton in May, then Willard in June, Back-slapping stories from community pillars. But many asked to hear a woman speak soon, A Sandisfield-borne foot-hiller.

I'm referring to the Oral History series Of which there's been great feedback. August 9th at 11 a.m., call me with queries. Lean close to hear Cora Roraback!!

Oh, that day also, it's our Society election. Yours truly is the only known selection.

Thank you to vendors, and treat-bakers, the July Fair pays our bills. And J. and K. Burrows, who manned and womanned the grill, I thank them deeply and so many more, Marcia and Terry, Jo and the Bakunis four, Those who wrangled awnings and stuff to sell. Them guiding our humble society, Big hearts spring from their wells.

Oh, and thanks Mr. Freedman, the financial lead man, that thankless job that our society doth require. P.S I'm suggesting, requesting, a patron, a donation, to supply us a self-draining dehumidifier.



FIRE AND EMT CALLS JUNE 2014

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| FIRE | |
| Assist EMT's..... | 2 |
| False alarms | 3 |
| EMT | |
| Medical calls | 9 |
| Motor vehicle accidents | 1 |



1873 East Otis Road
East Otis, MA 01029
413.269.4309

Bruce's HARDWARE

Roadwork on Beech Plain Road



This summer's work of widening and regrading North Beech Plain Road should be completed early fall. Above, trucks from Tryon Construction assemble near the Beech Plain Cemetery. Below, road crews have uncovered a few very large rocks, no surprise to anyone in Sandisfield.

Revolution to Revisit New Boston Inn

Prior to the establishment of military or police, local able-bodied men were expected to gather and drill in order to ultimately stand ready to defend these hills. The historic New Boston Inn is a probable site of these colonial "musters."

The Inn is sponsoring a colonial reenactment of just such an encampment Saturday August 16, all day, and Sunday, August 17, until noon.

The Olde Lebanon Towne Militia will be welcoming all visitors. In the 1770s the Lebanon Militia were Connecticut revolutionaries. Today's members dress like the originals, carry and fire flintlock rifles, and cook and eat the way our ancestors did. There will be hands-on tin making and woodworking projects for adults and children, musket firing, and a representation of camp life in 1770's New England. All are welcome. ♡



The above photo was taken during the program last year. This is the second year for the encampment, in what is hoped to become an annual event at the Inn.



By Laurie Foulke-Green, Librarian

Our next genealogy assistance classes will be August 27 and September 24, Wednesday evenings, 6:30. Call for genealogy requests at 258-4966 Monday and Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

Sorry, because of limited space we have to refuse further book donations. Thank you for past donations.

NEW BOOKS:

- Windigo Island/William Kent Krueger
- The Lost Island/Preston and Child
- The Dog Who Could Fly: True Story of a WWII Airman and a Four-Legged Hero Who Flew at His Side/Damien Lewis
- All We Had/Ann Weatherwax
- Shots Fired/C. J. Box
- Tom Clancy's Support And Defend /Mark Greaney
- Mean Streak/Sandra Brown
- Wicked Ways/Lisa Jackson
- Love Letters/Debbie Macomber
- Sight Unseen/Iris Johansen
- Harbor Island/Carla Neggers
- Lisette's List/Susan Vreeland
- Designated Daughters/Margaret Maron



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Out on a Limb articles are opinion/editorials written by and for town residents about subjects important to Sandisfield. They do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Times. Send proposed articles to PO Box 584, Sandisfield, 01255, or email editor@sandisfieldtimes.org.



1,001 Reasons The Mega-Station Won't Work

By Bogart W. Muller

The subject of the Select Board meeting Monday, August 11, is the monster gas station being proposed across from Tuckers on Rt. 8, complete with fast-food drive thru, gas pumps galore, and in-your-face signage. The welcome town to the Berkshires has just been fed another healthy spoonful of Castor oil.

Folks here speculate everything from "Maybe they believe people from out of state will drive all the way up here and fill their tanks" to "Truckers will stop here to refuel for the long haul" to "The town could use the revenue." All are semi-believable. However, as they say in prison, do the math ...

1. Nobody with a consciously sound budget is going to cruise way up here just to save a couple of bucks on their fill-up. Blow half an afternoon

and drive a 16-mile roundtrip from anywhere? If you do, you just burned off what you saved.

2. Truckers use fuel that is located on-site from where they leave and where they are going. No trucker (especially one on a tight schedule) is going to negotiate a small driveway just for a Hostess Ring Ding when Xtra Mart has an ez-in/ez-out spot perfect for a semi to take a break. The big truckstop outside of Lee on the Pike is only 30 minutes away. That's peanuts for a driver.

3. The town may not see all this "revenue." This complex is to be built on Rt. 8 so the Commonwealth would already have its wet finger in the sugar bowl. Also, the owner will likely file for a tax abatement. The town does not maintain the road in front so why should they pay the same as an in-town business.

The proposition also indicates that traffic will not be an issue. I have lived in on Rt. 8 for almost twenty years and have seen serious speeding, passing in no-passing zones, middle fingers, heard horns blasting and people shouting, witnessed a fist fight, spin outs in the rain/snow, and four deaths within a half mile from here. Rt. 8 here is a very dangerous stretch of highway. It is the first passing zone in something like 5 miles, and when people get angry at the driver in front of them they pass whether the sign says passing allowed or not.

From an ecological standpoint this proposition takes on a whole new level.

- There are two swamps, a brook, and a very unstable cliff hovering right over said plan. These wetlands will have to be contended with, despite that fact that the ConComm has had their say.

- I feel bad for the hunters that know that hillside and its plentiful game. The party is over for them.

- I feel really bad for the various animals that will be attracted by the very bright light, cross the highway and get splattered by a car.

- The cliffs high above are loose and deteriorating. Anyone remember the landslide behind John Campetti's house a few years back? Boulders the size of Volkswagons came crashing down.


As you cross the state line north of Winsted, blue welcome signs advertising the cultural Berkshire getaway will be followed by signs of Dunkin' Donuts, Pyramid brand generic cigarettes, and lowest gas prices allowed by law. Going north, everyone stops in Winsted to pick up road goodies and fuel. People traveling south off the Mass Pike going south pull into Micky D's drive-thru in Lee for a snack and get fuel right next door. They will have little reason to make such a stop down here in Sandisfield. Do the math ...

Either direction of travel, this place won't be very significant other than, maybe, those roller hot dogs you just can't get anywhere else. Do the math ...

I wish to thank readers for the kind words I received from last years' Out on a Limb. "A Choice for Sandisfield" opened a few eyes to this impending doom. Nobody wants this monstrosity around. Do you think the Pigs Fly Farm will be able to sell their fresh produce there? The distributor contract won't allow it. There will be a huge shelf full of unhealthy snacks marked down for quick sale, help yourself.

If we really wanted something like this, why don't we have it already?

This is not a done deal yet. The Select Board has still to vote, and they want to hear from you and me. Attend the meeting August 11, 7 p.m., at Town Hall Annex. Let them know what you think.

Consider the world we have now, and the world that might be coming toward us – a world that looks like everywhere else. If we wanted to live there, why are we here in Sandisfield? 

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

JUST A NOTE ...

Just a note to let you know we thoroughly read the Times as soon as it arrives. Although we can't get up there as often as we'd like to, the paper keeps us thoroughly in the know.

The little house we built with our own four hands is dear to our hearts, as is the town itself. Our four children feel the same way and go there whenever possible. Spectacle Pond is one of their fondest memories of growing up.

Sincerely,

Lila Innes
Granby, Connecticut



A coyote pup crossing West Street in mid-July. Wanda Beckwith wrote: "The poor little thing looked so scared and lost. We truly hope he/she found her family."

Photo: John Beckwith



MORE THAN JUST A GOOD PAPER ...

Thank you for the wonderful work that you are all doing with The Sandisfield Times. It is a precious instrument and far surpasses any other paper from any other small town that I have ever seen. It is fun to read, attractively presented, and very useful. It is a binding treasure for Sandisfield.

Judi Friedman
Sullivan Road

Susy Says:

August is the month when taking a bath means never getting dry.

-- Susan Galik

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By Elizur Yale Smith

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NOW HEAR THIS!

Edited by Laura Rogers-Castro.

Please send notices for Now Hear This! to calendar@sandisfieldtimes.org.

AUGUST EVENTS

Stuck Down Here: The Fix of American Poverty on Saturday, August 2, at 10:30 a.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center. Val Coleman explores the causes and remedies of poverty, including a discussion of literacy, nutrition, housing, and crime and the effects of anti-poverty programs. \$10.

Sandisfield Historical Society Meeting on Saturday, August 9, at 11:00 a.m. at the South Sandisfield Meeting House on Route 183. Part 3 of the Oral History Project with guest speaker Cora Roraback. Potluck lunch will follow.

Through the Looking Glass: Norman Rockwell's America as Imagined Community on Saturday, August 9, at 10:30 a.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center. Trinity College Professor Bill Cohn will talk about Rockwell's version of the American community and how it found its way into the consciousness of generations of Americans. \$10.

Sandisfield Volunteer Fireman Steak Roast on Saturday, August 9, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Dancing from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. at Fire House #2 on Route 57. Tickets \$25 are available from any of the volunteers and are not available at the door. Call or visit A & M Auto, 258-3381, for tickets. Buy ice cream bars afterwards to benefit the Sandisfield Scholarship Fund.

Revolutionary War Re-enactment, sponsored by the New Boston Inn. Saturday, August 16 all day; Sunday, August 17 until noon. At the Inn. Experience living in the 1700s. Musket firing, kitchen set-up, outdoor cooking.

Novelists Talk Books on Saturday, August 16 at 10:00 a.m. Sandisfield novelists Courtney Maum ("I Am Having So Much Fun Here Without You") and Miriam Karmel ("Being Esther") discuss and read from their recently published debut novels. \$10.

Sandisfield Arts Center Fundraiser on Saturday, August 30, at 5:00 p.m. at the Hubbard's home in Sandisfield. Includes wine, hors d'oeuvres, and the music of jazz musician Zack Cross. \$45, visit www.sandisfieldartscenter.org.

Genealogy Assistance Class on Wednesday, August 27, at 6:30 p.m. at the Sandisfield Library. Free.

AUGUST EVENTS IN SURROUNDING TOWNS

Family Concert on Saturday, August 9 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., sponsored by the Otis Cultural Council, and featuring Roger Tincknell with children's songs and singing games. The concert will be located at the Otis Town Gazebo (Route 8 center). Rain location is the Own Hall Gym. Please bring your own lawn chairs for this free concert.

Community Tag/Craft Sale on Saturday, August 23 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., on the Tolland Town Green, sponsored by the Tolland Ladies Aid Society with entry fee proceeds provided to the Bertha Fowler Hale Scholarship Fund.

Berkshire Pulse on Saturday, August 23 at 4:30 p.m. at the Historic Meeting House on the New Marlborough Green. "From Satie to Gershwin: Music, Dance, and the Spoken Word." For more information, visit www.newmarlborough.org or 413-229-2785.

Yoga in the Garden at Ashintully Gardens in Tyringham on Tyringham Road. Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. and Saturdays at 1:00 p.m. \$10. For more information, contact instructor Tracy Remelius, tracyremelius@gmail.com. Benefits the Trustees of the Reservation.

Programs, Otis Library and Museum, 48 N. Main Road.

- Month of August: Paintings of artist Jim Day of Otis and Florida.
- August 6, Wednesday, 6-8 p.m. Young Adult Writing Workshop with Jana Laiz
- August 7, Thursday, 6-7:30 p.m. Author Thom Garvey will discuss his novel, "Rough Piece"
- August 12, Tuesday, 6:30-8:00 p.m. Author Sheila Weller will discuss her book, "Girls Like Us"
- August 13, Wednesday, 6:30-8:00 p.m. Author John Kelly will discuss his book, "The Graves are Walking"
- Month of September: Photographs by Geoffrey Coelho of Otis

ONGOING EVENTS

Summer schedule for **Select Board**: August 11 and 25 at 7 p.m., Town Hall Annex.

Summer schedule for **Sandisfield Treasurer**: Mon and Tue, 8:30-3:30; Wed 9:00-noon, Town Hall Annex.

Farmington River Regional School District, first Monday of the month, 7 p.m., Farmington River Regional School, Rt. 8, JoAnn Austin, Superintendent.

Planning Board, second Tuesday of the month, 6 p.m., Old Town Hall.

Board of Assessors, second Tuesday of the month, 5 p.m., Town Hall Annex.

Conservation Commission, third Tuesday of the month, 7 p.m., Town Hall Annex.

Board of Health, first Wednesday of the month, 6 p.m., Old Town Hall.

Council on Aging, every Wednesday, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Senior Center, Town Hall Annex. Potluck lunch at noon, bingo at 1 p.m. Free blood pressure screening every fourth Wednesday.

Finance Committee, second Wednesday of the month, 7 p.m., Sandisfield Library.

Strategic Planning Committee, third Wednesday of the month, 7 p.m., Fire Station #2 on Rt. 57.

Sandisfield Public Library Hours: Monday and Tuesday, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; Wednesday, 6:30-8:30 p.m.; Thursday, 2-5 p.m., Saturday, 9 a.m.-12 noon. Phone: 258-4966.



TOWN BUSINESS

Town Business, our summary of minutes of the Select Board, will resume in September. For those with internet access, posted minutes can be found at the town's website: www.sandisfield.info. Go to Meetings and then to Board of Selectmen.

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



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Donations of all sizes are needed to ensure the continuation of this newspaper. Please send checks to: *The Sandisfield Times*, P.O. Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255 or donate online at our website: www.sandisfieldtimes.org.

Copies of *The Sandisfield Times* are available in Sandisfield at A&M Auto, the Arts Center (in season), the Transfer Station, Post Office, the New Boston Inn, New Boston Crane & Sled, the Silverbrook Café & Country Store, Villa Mia, MJ Tuckers, When Pigs Fly Farm and Town Hall. Copies are also available in Otis at Katie's Market, Papa's Fuel, Otis Library, and the Farmington River Diner. Other locations include the Monterey General Store and the Southfield Store in New Marlborough. Back issues are available for purchase.

The Times can be mailed to your home by paid subscription (see form below left) or you can read it (free) online as a PDF document at www.sandisfieldtimes.org.

We welcome submissions, comments and suggestions, including letters to the editor **BY THE 15TH OF THE MONTH PRIOR**. We may edit for space, style or clarity. We will try to publish Public Service Announcements when we have room, with priority given to Sandisfield organizations. No portion of the *The Sandisfield Times* may be reproduced without permission.

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